

DRAGAZINE

Issue #3 \$2.95

GENDER: AMERICAN GEISHA OR GREEDY MEDIA SLUT?

**They Call
Him A Drag
Queen,**
and he likes it.
Shameless Self-
Promoter Flows
At The Mouth
about...

**Madonna
Boy George
Doris Day
Petula
Clarke
and Sears
Breast Forms**

Plus...
**More Drag
Names, The
Mahogany
Ball, Outskirts**

P.S. Bette Davis



*Not Free Lo Cal Hi Fiber
Decaffeinated Issue*

EDIE TORIAL MESSAGE

If you're going to do Famous Personality Drag, you should have the appropriate 'Tag Line' down and use it all night long. Match the names and their lines:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1) Barbra Streisand | A) Boris, dahling, that squirrel and moose are getting away! |
| 2) Bette Davis | B) But they were just love birds! |
| 3) Blanche Dubois | C) Can we talk? |
| 4) Ernestine | D) Happy Birthday, Mr. President! |
| 5) Gladys Kravitz | E) Herb, I just know there's something going on at the Stevens'! |
| 6) Jessica Rabbit | F) I depend on the kindness of strangers. |
| 7) Joan Crawford | G) I'm not bad, I'm just drawn that way! |
| 8) Joan Rivers | H) Just a little more wine with this oueve frit. |
| 9) Judy Garland | I) No More Wire Hangers Ever! |
| 10) Julia Child | J) One Ringy Dingy! |
| 11) Karen Black | K) People. People who need people. |
| 12) Katherine Hepburn | L) Shop at Ralphs and be a Smart Shopper! |
| 13) Marilyn Monroe | M) The calla lillies are in bloom again. |
| 14) Natasha Fatali | N) Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore! |
| 15) Shirley Jones | O) Your seat cushion also doubles as a flotation device! |
| 16) Tipi Hedron | P) Ya didn't eat ya lunch so ya can't have ya din din! |

Answers: 1K, 2Y, 3F, 4J, 5E, 6G, 7I, 8C, 9N, 10H, 11O 12M, 13D, 14A, 15L, 16B

If you're a drag enthusiast or just a tourist (and who isn't one or the other?) Dragazine invites you to dish with us! For those of you who are into 'recreational transvestism' to others who are on the edge of the Gender Bell Curve, Dragazine is for you! It's a Whole 'Nother World!

THE NAME GAME

Here are some new Drag names we've dug out of our dark and cobwebbed minds to amuse and delight you. Heard any new names lately? Be the first one of your species to play the Dragazine Name Game! Drop us a line at Dragazine, P.O. Box 691664, West Hollywood, CA 90069. Accept no substitutes! C'mon, you little shavers!

Ann Ominous
Bella De Ball
Bertha De Blues
Carla Tatendent
Carry Daway
Connie Lingus
Connie Sewer
Dee Cup
Dee Dee Tea
Erika Stradda
Fran Kenstynce
Frieda B. Me
Jennie Tailya
Jill Ted
Lauren Order

Lil Biddydick
Lucille Bald
Mae Wee
Marge O'Rin
Milly Terry
Moaning Lisa
Natalie Attired
Paula Abdrool
Patty Wagon
Penny Traishun
Phyllis Sofikal
Rhoda Dendron
Rosetta Stoned
Sue Perfishal
Val A. Parking

Bonus Barbs To Scream Back:
Miss Adventure
Miss Aligned
Miss Apprehension
Miss Appropriated
Miss Begotten
Miss Calculation
Miss Communication
Miss Conception
Miss Demeanor
Miss Fit
Miss Fortune
Miss Guided
Miss Informed
Miss Judged
Miss Understood

Dragazine is now available at these fine stores, and if it's not there, bug 'em!

- * A Different Light Bookstore, 8853 Sta Monica Bl., W. Hollywood CA 213-854-6601
- * A Different Light Bookstore, 489 Castro Street, San Francisco CA 415-431-0891
- * A Different Light Bookstore, 548 Hudson Street, New York CA 212-989-4850
- * Circus of Books, 8230 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood CA 213-656-6533
- * Circus of Books, 4001 Sunset Blvd. Silverlake CA 213-656-6533
- * Dorothy's Surrender, 7985 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood CA 213-650-4871
- * F Street Adult Video and Gifts, 2004 University Ave., San Diego CA 619-298-2644
- * Glad Day Bookshop, 673 Boylston St., Boston MA 617-267-3010
- * Unicorn Bookstore, 8940 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood CA 213-652-6253
- * **Your Store Name Here!**



Publisher Lois Commondenominator poses with lookalike Lyla Kadog. Mirror, Mirror!



Publicity Hound/Chanteuse Gender - All made up and ready for The Mahogany Ball!

DRAGAZINE * Issue #3

Dedicated to Craig Russell

PUBLISHER/EDITRIX/HEAD DRAG QUEEN
Lois Commondenominator

SOUNDING BORED BOARD/DRAG BUDDY
Lyla Kadog

RECEPTIONIST/OFFICE PERSON/TYPESSETTER
Sybil Disobedience

CONTRIBUTORS

Feature Interview by the Publisher; Media Notes by Sybil Disobedience. Cartoon by David Yazbek first appearing in Spy Magazine; Performance Article by Herbert Muschamp, first appearing in Vogue; Drag Names by our friends, paid (and unpaid) readers. Subscribe so I'll get rich on the millions I make on this thing! NOT!

Dragazine is put out by Drag Queens, so don't expect it more than twice or three times a year while we dry our nails. Send \$4.95 for two issue subscription. Back Issues are \$2.95 each. Dragazine Club Memberships at \$15 to help defray printing costs. For advertising inquiries, leave a brief message at 310-855-9435, or write to Dragazine, P.O. Box 691664, West Hollywood, CA 90069. P.S. Halloween is on a Saturday Night in 1992! Dragazine is mailed to you in a plain envelope with a return address of D.Z.D.Q. (C) 1992. P.P.S. Sue Casa and Helena Handbag have gone on to greener pastures. We appreciate their generous and creative contributions to Dragazine. Also, thank you Clayton!!

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HALLOWEEN 1991! SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Come to West Hollywood for Halloween!
There's room for everyone! It's a scream
if you're a Queen!



Hot Air About The Mahogany Ball

by Lois Commendominator

Memories of Halloween ebb from your mind like... well, they just ebb. Hibernating until next Halloween was not to be, however. Gender sent the call out through the grapevine that the upcoming **Mahogany Ball Drag Fashion Show** could use models (that would actually show up) and would I commit myself? Do the words F-ing Yes mean anything? Club 1970's Cool Dude **Billy Limbo** talked someone at **Stringfellow's Discotheque** into gambling that only a show this wild could pump a few more dollars into what has got to be the slowest nights of anyone's calendar - the night *before* New Year's Eve. And a Monday night to boot. And in the middle of a recession. And in the middle of **Beverly Hills!** Gender finally phone-tagged a gaggle (a throng? a herd? a crew? a cluster?) of **Los Angeles'** least busy Queens. Most of us even threw up to 4 costumes together threw together up to 4 costumes! That made the costume changing experience like male bonding for me - all the guys let their wigs down, literally! **Christine Amen** vamped her way across the footlights looking slinky, sexy, and succulent. **Rosie Del Mar**, current Empress of L.A., did the lip-synched crowd-pleaser, "Do You Know Where You're Going To?" **Sean De Lear** looked deviously. The always fashionable **Chi Chi La Rue** had a fabulous cat fight with the vavavoomerous **Rose Bud**. **Bradley H. Picklesimer** stunned the sparsely packed onlookers with a barely-



Megin: Double-Take Mistress Noir

there catsuit, pasties and platforms. **Megin**, pictured here, was the night's double-take mistress. She-he was so beautiful that **Lipstick Lesbians** took notes. **Thelma, Cherde Watley, Enorma**

Tamale, Pollianne and Slave, David Foster, Larry Law, Michelle, Shayla, my date for the evening **Danielle De Long Beach** and I rounded out the cast. (Please forgive me if I missed anyone's name!) Fashionwise, I howled in a delicious spaghetti-strapped blue-polyester clingy disco dress which hung with a vengeance off my ample falsies, hip and butt pads. I looked too faboo in a brunette blunt-cut bob I bagged at a wigatorium I go to on **Wig Row** near, well, that's my secret. It was a hit as it showed off the goldtone **Chanel** knock-off earrings that were only a dollar for the pair from **Suzies For Less**. I then floated out in a black velveteen trapeze from **Melrose Blvd.'s** own **Sacks Fifth Off**. It swirled so well that it inspired me to get some mileage out of my flapper-length faux pearls, which were by now revolving around my **Adam's Apple** at 33 1/3. I borrowed a full-length corselet and petticoat ensemble, which tested the very outer edge of the envelope in the current **Underwear-For-Outerwear** trend spawned by **Madonna**. I finally got my money's worth (\$10!) from a black velvet number I prematurely thought I laid to rest November 1st. **CNN's Style with Elsa Klensch** would have applauded me clip-clopping down the runway in my fashion-victim black mules from **Patrini's**. Tights under fishnets saved the legs, but the chest got the blade as I shaved with the grain for what was now the second time in 3 months. And so we said goodbye to 1991(feh!) and hello to 1992 in Fashion and Style. Do you know where you're going to? **LC/**

Outskirts

by Sybil Disobedience

Now I've heard of everything! A Drag Queen Comic Book?!? Yes, darlings! New York's own Hedda Lettuce shows us what she's been doing since she stopped being a couch potato. Straight outta The Big Apple, this Drag Queen earns my gushing gratitude for putting transvestites in their rightful place next to other superheroes - on the supermarket shelf and into the hands of impressionable young minds! Giving birth to "**Dragnet; The Feminist Militant Drag Queen Super Hero Comic Book with a Mission!**" was definitely a labor of love! Not only do I now have to balance in my stilettos, but I better look and act politically correct while I'm doing it! Or so is the thrust of the comic. Whatever blows up your skirt, I've always said! The packaging is underground and subversive, a magic combination around Dragazine-land. Ms. Lettuce even played the Name Game unwittingly by mentioning a list of supposedly major U.P.C. (Un-Politically Correct) Drag Queens in New York, serving up gems like **Shipsynka, Ladi Rabbitterds** and **Rubi Slippa**. Who do you think she's talking about? If you like Drag Queen empowerment stories with a new-age-gaia-goddess-crystal-homophobes-get-the-shit-kicked-out-of-'em slant, then this is for you! I picked up NYQ Magazine and spotted their review of this gem. How I adore new magazines that zines that attempt to pander to the Drag Queen inside of me! I got mine by sending \$5.95 to A Different Light Bookstore, 548 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10010. Go get it - I got it - it's good! **SD/**



GENDER: AMERICAN GEISHA OR GREEDY MEDIA SLUT?

Lois: Where did the name Gender come from?

Gender: I didn't want to be a Susie and I didn't want to be a Tiffany and I didn't want to be a Cassandra, but I wanted a name I could use and grow with. The first lip-sync I did was Boy George, and at the time nobody really knew who Boy George was yet - there was like one single out. The older clientele must have thought I was some funky chick with braids and the make-up. In one of his songs he said something about 'the new boy gender', and I figured Gender was a very appropriate name for somebody who's crossdressing. If anyone was going to give me a last name, some people have called me Gender Bender. There are people who will say Gender Fuck. But it's just Gender. I hate it when people say Ginger!

Lois: O.K. You are a Gender. So tell us about your life. Where did you spend your childhood years?

Gender: I come from Downey, California - home of the Carpenters, which is just inside Los Angeles county. My parents were both born in Anaheim - the home of Disneyland - Mickey Mouse.

Lois: So you're like a fourth generation....?

Gender: Californian.

Lois: Good ethnic background. Gender, can a person be addicted to Glamour?

Gender: Yes. Anyone whose ever had a fashion crisis will admit to feeling withdrawals of glamour - you try to get out some place, you're watching the clock, you don't know what to wear and you just have to be completely glamorous for the evening - God forbid anyone should ever have a camera on while someone's having a fashion fit - nothing's worse! Everything's alright if you can get out the door, but just. I love the glamour questions! Give me more of those glamour questions!

Lois: Where do you get your glamorous outfits?

Gender: When I first started, all of my stuff was thrift store retro. I found a lot of stuff at places just off the beaten path - never in the big city because everybody knows the worth of it and gobbles it up quickly. I used to go shopping in Garden Grove and find fabulous buys on half price days! Then, I had a best friend that lived in the same

building as I did. He was a struggling designer and used to make things for me because he loved the idea that these clothes were really going to go out and be seen. Since he's moved away, I've been very lucky to have friends of friends that say I know this person or I know that person. Nowadays, all my costumes are made for me because my current higher end work dictates that the clothes I have constructed are made to last.

Lois: How do you pick your outfits?

Gender: I've been to a lot of shops that specialize in Drag all over. I wear a size 10 in women's shoes that you can get in any women's shoe store. Everything else I apply to my boy clothes that I apply to the drag, especially when it comes to the stage. I really don't want something that I can just walk into a shop, no matter how expensive it is, and get. I want something that's going to be extremely unique. Nobody else can come flouncing in with it since it's not off the rack. You know, it's not always a ready-to-wear market for Drag Queens, although that trapeze dress you have could work on a lot of people.

Lois: At my Halloween party you came dressed as Betty Page, a famous early pin-up girl. Then there's the one I fell in love with when your hair is piled up high. Are there other images you want to emulate?

Gender: Exactly - that last one is my signature look - that's the one I've had the longest, but I don't wear it out to clubs. It's a very sixties oriented thing, so the numbers that I do in that look are what I do in that look are what I like to call kitch classics. I'm not going to wear that if I'm doing torch songs or 40's swing numbers. I have a show that's coming up and I'll probably do 4 sets, and for each set I'll have a different outfit - different clothes, different wigs, different songs.

Lois: What do you want people to come away with from your show?

Gender: Almost everything I do is meant to be humorous.

Lois: Where would you place yourself on the "realness" scale?

Gender: I'm not trying to pass - I don't change my voice, I don't sing in a falsetto - that's not the point! They call me a Drag

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P. S. B e t t e D a v i s

T h e A r t o f M r . R a n d y A l l e n

"Hello, I'm Bette Davis. Not Bette Davis the glamorous actress of the 30's and 40's. Not Bette Davis the Grand Dame of the screen in the 50's. Not Bette Davis the cheap whore movie star of the 60's - this is P.S. Bette Davis..., Post Stroke. I was born Ruth Elizabeth Davis on April 5th, 1908 in Lowell, Massachusetts. I had my first cigarette on April 6th, 1908. It was so satisfying after a bottle of milk..., and brandy."

"If I had played Scarlett in Gone with The Wind, I assure you that I would have strangled that icky, sweet Melanie by the second reel. And the South would have won the war!"

"I'll only be remembered by a generation of homosexuals, not by my movies, but by an army of female impersonators yelling 'What a dump!' But at least I have female impersonators doing me. Poor Joan Crawford has no female impersonators doing her. There's just not that much there to impersonate!"

"I was appalled that young Joan (AKA Lucille Seward) would allow her name to be chosen by the public in a magazine. I assume 'Joan Crawford' was chosen only because 'the whore of Babylon' was already taken!"

"Poor Joan! She tried so hard because she was so insecure. She was afraid that no matter what she did, that people thought that she was a tacky, trashy actress with no talent. She was so right!"

"Joan and I were in one movie together - Whatever Happened To Baby Jane. I played Baby Jane. Joan played..., whatever. I got on the phone with Robert Aldridge, the Director of Baby Jane, and I asked him, 'Robert - did you ever

sleep with Joan Crawford?' He said no. I said, 'are you telling me that you and Lassie are the only two in Hollywood that have not slept with Joan Crawford?'"

"I turned around and Joan Crawford was standing there with tears in her eyes. I said, 'What is this shit?' Joan Crawford was one of the meanest women I've ever met. Joan Crawford was a bitch! When we shot that scene where I had to pick Joan Crawford up and drag her across the room, Joan Crawford put lead weights under her nightgown. It was like picking up Shelly Winters! I pulled every muscle in my back! When we shot that scene where I had to kick Joan Crawford, I put lead weights in my shoes. I kicked the Hell out of Joan Crawford - and I even got paid to film it!"

"I guess this will conclude our interview together. I know you may have expected more, but I'm old and I don't give a damn what you expect!"

PLEASE SEE P.S. Bette Davis, performed by **Randy Allen**, when he/she/they comes to your neighborhood. I was lucky enough to catch his act when he blew into town direct from **Atlantic City's Bally's Hotel & Casino An Evening at La Cage**. I saw this brilliant performer do much more than the above even hints at when he was recently at **The Rose Garden Performance Center**, 665 N. Robertson Blvd., W. Hollywood, CA 90069. For booking information, please contact **Wakefield Management Entertainment Productions, Inc.**, 208 S. 3rd St., Philadelphia, PA 19106, 215-627-7000. Publicity handled by **J.D. Kent Public Relations**, 929 W. Olive Ave., Ste. B, Burbank, CA 91506, 818-567-1376. L.C./

Gender

continued from page 5

Queen! Fortunately, I do have the realness of my stage presence, my comedy and my singing. I am influenced by a lot of different singers that I'm sure I don't sound anything like. I've always loved Doris Day, Petula Clarke, Judy Garland and Frank Sinatra.

Who else is really super groovy?

Lois: You said you liked Boy George in his early years.

Gender: Anything he puts out is fine, but the first album was an interesting awakening for me. I went into a 'bookstore' in Downey and I saw this magazine called "The Face", and there was this beautiful girl on the cover with very interesting make-up and these braids and this hat. I thought, gee, she's very interesting, and didn't even look at the rest of the magazine. I went home and I told my twin brother Gerald.

Lois: Identical?

Gender: Yeah, he lives in San Francisco.

Lois: So when's your birthday?

Gender: September 4th, 19 humpf.

Lois: Do you have an innie or an outie?

Gender: I used to have a in-betweenie, but these days its become an innie. It's actually cut in the shape of a flower. Our doctor was very clever. Anyway, I said there was this really interesting girl on the cover of this magazine. I wanted to make conversation with him because I was intrigued by it, then eventually I was hooked. Am I just flowing at the mouth?

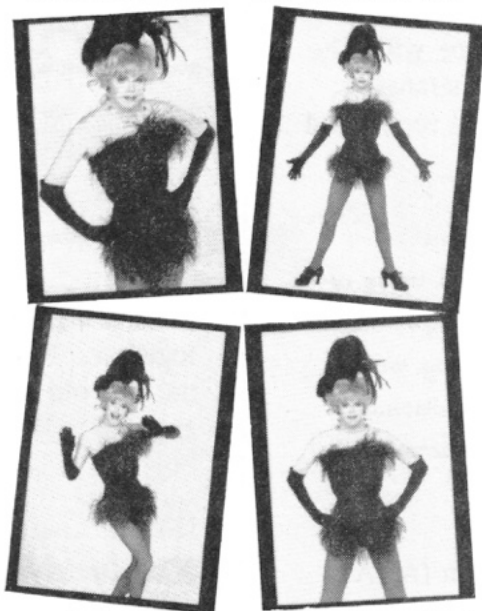
Lois: Any special beauty tips?

Gender: When I was very very skinny, I used to wear hip pads. I made them myself - I cut them out of foam rubber and I put them under several layers of pantyhose and it actually gave a very round, curvacious effect. It was very inconvenient in ways that should make your reader's imaginations fly! Actually, it was very hard to pull all these layers down because it was fitted in so tightly. If you met a man, getting down to the waist would be one thing, but to see these big flaps of foam rubber fall out - what an aphrodisiac! Another thing is that I wear a very good corset! Unfortunately, I don't get the opportunity to work out or dance as much as I used to. When I'm out, I prefer dishing with my friends. I wear matt flesh-tone dance tights and over that textured hose like fishnets, which is all it takes to cover the hair and get a show-girl appeal. Of course, I shave my face. I wish I was naturally hairless there. Shaving's horrifying. I know a lot of Drag Queens out there use Pan Stick - very old school. I think a lot use it because it covers the beard and they can get it on

thick enough. I like Joe Blasco because I like their Olive-Beige series since it has a lot of gold in it. A lot of these foundations, especially these horrifying Pan Sticks are very pink and beige. Some queens look orange and others look pink! By the way, I love to look at the before and after shots you did in Issue No. 2!

Lois: Thank you! What do you use for boobs?

Gender: I have these fabulous mastectomy breasts I found in a special health catalog from Sears. They have a contour that fits the body when you put a bandeau over them. I cut off the top of Leggs support hose and turned it upside-down, and it's like a little tube-top. I wear it under everything I wear. Since then, I've graduated to even a large size, but the problem is I went back to the catalog and they changed it around a little bit. These were the most inexpensive styles - \$7 foam rubber breastforms. They don't offer that



particular type anymore. Dear Sears, this is Gender. Your breasts were the best I've ever worn.

Lois: Do you wear feminine fragrances?

Gender: I wear them all the time! Actually, I don't believe that fragrances have a sexual identity. In fact, women are infamous for wanting to wear men's fragrances. Marketing gives fragrances a sexual identity. I like spicy fragrances, like Opium.

Lois: Mmm, a product endorsement! Isn't Old Spice spicy enough for you?

Back to beauty tips - do you wear nails?

Gender: I've never worn nails, actually. There's a lot of differences between me and the kinds of Drag that have been. I certainly wouldn't want to alienate anyone, but there are stereotypical old school ideas such as lip-syncing or impersonating a character.

When I was first doing my bread and butter Drag, I did Annette Funnicello, Nancy Sinatra, Connie Francis, Petula Clarke - lots of campy and funny 50's and 60's retro. If you did lip-sync, you got up there and did as many characters as you could get away with. Then, when I got the opportunity to start singing, the 'groovy-homo' scene erupted. Until the club Sit N Spin exploded, it was all underground and building momentum. Everything I do nowadays is Gender doing this or that song.

Lois: There's nothing modern to match the campiness of Annette Funnicello! I would consider what you're doing Performance Art.

Gender: I've had that description applied to me before. I've had some people come up to me after a performance and say, You're not a Drag Queen! You're..., a Performance Artist! You transcend Drag. But I'm not trying to transcend Drag - it's just a tool I use. I like to think that what I do can reach everyone in the audience. Some Performance Art that I've seen doesn't do that.

Lois: Give us a scoop from your Adult Video Industry review column!

Gender: Yes, you know I write a gossip column for a magazine called "G.V. Guide", which stands for Gay Video Guide and Chi Chi writes a column for Adult Video News. Chi Chi's column is about the straight industry but strangely enough Chi Chi does most of his work on gay sets and mine is about the gay industry and I do most of my work on straight sets! Often we get on the phone and give each other scoops. Also, because I'm a make-up artist by profession, I have all the ins with the boys and the productions. I just reported the fact that Madonna had chosen all of her dancers for her next video from the Gaeity Theater in New York. When Chi Chi La Rue and I were in New York performing at Boy Bar and also co-hosts of the Robin Bird Show which was also delightful, we were staying at the same hotel that the Gaeity was keeping some of their out-of-town dancers at. We all met up in the hallway and talk talk talked and they said that they had seen Madonna and her Director and someone else and a few body guards and she was trying to be incognito. In my column, nothing's a mystery! Going back and forth between New York and Los Angeles, not to throw rocks but L.A. is like a resort town between the two when it comes to the volume of venues for Drag.

Lois: What was the last book that you read?

Gender: The last book that I read was the last series in the Tales of the City by Armistead Maupin. I just think they're delightful - all these different characters -

continued on page 12

HOW TO HANDLE VELVET SUCCESSFULLY

by Lois Commondenominator

Velvet has both pile and nap. Run your hand over a piece. One way it is rough, the other smooth. The smooth way is said to be with the nap, the rough against it. Hold the velvet lengthwise against you and look down at it. It will look dark if the nap of the pile runs upward, light if the nap runs down. Unless it is one of the novelty velvets which are guaranteed to stand rough handling, velvet demands care in treatment. Unpack it as soon as received. Do not let it get rumpled or crushed. Handle with finger-tips. Hold velvet lightly but firmly to obviate finger marks. Brush lightly with a soft brush while steaming to take out marks on velvet. Gently stroke your velvet until you get to know it. Learn velvet. Velvet. *She* wore Velvet. Blue Velvet. Silky, satiny, soft, smooth, plush, velveteen, velour, velvety Velvet. Downy, tender, supple, pliant, yielding, feathery, fleecy, pillowy, cushiony, lithe, limber Velvet. Flimsy, flaccid, limp, doughy, spongy Velvet. Velvet voice, velvet touch, velvet skin, Velveta cheese, Velvet. Velvet Velvet Velvet Velvet Velvet. VVVVelvet. Vain, vapid, venomous, vindictive, vulgar Velvet. Velvet? VELVET?!? Vuck!! LC/

Media Notes

by Bea Flat

Dragazine caught them with their pantyhose in a bunch. *Did you???* Witness L. A. Times, Letters To The Editor, 9/14/91 - C. Martin of San Francisco chides Times reporter Howard Rosenberg for his callous take against Drag Queens. Seems while attempting to praise Ron Reagan Jr.'s new T.V. talk show, Howard inserts foot in mouth by chirping, "and as a bonus in Week 1, not one transvestite." That sounds more like poor planning to me! According to Phil Donahue, someone Ron Reagan Jr. could take lessons from, his most popular show was on cross-dressers! And didn't you love Australia's premiere Drag Queen, Dame Edna Everage doing a 1-hour special on NBC, Saturday night, 11/30/91, co-starring Cher! Just don't give Edna any houseplants, but you had to be there, really. I was so thrilled when my good friend from San Diego, Mystere Fantasy, sent me that photocopy of the Vogue December 1991 article on Drag. Read the excerpts in this issue of Dragazine, and let's all subscribe to a Conde Nast publication tomorrow! Revolver bar here in West Hollywood got festive on us when it hosted the West coast's first Wigstock event, 10/30/91. Miss Lady Bunny was in our midst, and I failed to attend. Well, at least local paper Edge Magazine reported on the event for my vicarious enjoyment. I am happy for ex-Darrin Stephens Bewitched actor Dick Sargent came out on National Coming Out Day, but did he have to besmirch the name of Drag Queens everywhere? Seems he'd like us to think he's a regular guy, "I'm not a Drag Queen or a leather freak", says he. Maybe the first Darrin was cooler after all. Scooped again by the Globe, 12/3/91, article featuring hermaphrodite beauty Eva Robbins posing with Some-Obviously-Like-It-Hot actor Tony Curtis. Sound bites were being bitten as re-

ported in the L.A. Times 2/7/92, when reporter William Kissel captured a drag-tastic quip from Joe Boxer designer Nicholas Graham. He, Graham, hoped his new Girlfriend loungewear would appeal to "drag queens". "I think of the collection as high trash", gushed the California Mart 1990 West Coast designer of the year for menswear. Get thee to the Mall! Available at Bullocks, the Broadway and Victoria's Secret! There were so many plays featuring cross-dressing as a theme over the last few months, but the ones that came to my attention were; the national tour of 'M. Butterfly ending at the San Diego Civic Theater, Off Broadway's Pageant, and And Then There Was Nun at St. Genesius Theater in West Hollywood. Did you go to a play featuring Drag? Tell us about it! One of Andy Warhol's Factory fabulosae, the diva-stacious Holly Woodlawn made a few appearances around the country to plug away at her new book, A Low Life In High Heels (St. Martin's Press). Did you get an autograph? Well, today I went to A Different Light Bookstore here in West Hollywood, and what to my surprise did I find but competition! Yes, Today's Transvestite, March '92, Volume 1 Issue 1 was on the newsstand. Slightly glossier, more expensive (by \$1!), better desktop publishing, but does it have the heart and soul that Dragazine has? Who cares! There's room enough for everyone! Let's support all Drag efforts. If you're curious, then send \$12 for a one year subscription to Guy Planet MM, 302 Columbus Ave., #5, Boston, MA 02116. Do you think they would plug Dragazine in their rag? At press time, Rodney Dangerfield's new movie Ladybugs features Mr. No Respect in Drag. Let us know if the movie is any good or if we should wait until it's out on video. And finally, did anyone catch the blurb Dragazine got in the December issue (Number 178) of In Touch magazine? Take a peak on page 14 in their Touch and Go section. They said, and I quote, "Dragazine stands high heels and wigs above most 'home-grown' underground publications". It's good to be Queen! BF/

custom designs

for the discerning
Drag Queen



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PREGNANT



DRAG
QUEENS?



JAGONASI

"STRETCHED & STRANDED"

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HALLOWEEN '90, SAN FRANCISCO

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Letters to the Editrix

Dear Lois,

For me, dressing up in drag only means another degree of what I have lived with before.

One day in Haifa, Israel, a neighbor came downstairs to beg me to loan her some of my clothes for the holiday, Purim, which is to the other cultures like Halloween. Costumes, acting out of character, letting go, being uninhibited, all this was Purim. All this was to celebrate liberty - the Jews free from another oppressor - The Persians.

I asked my neighbor, "Why me?" She said because what I wore daily, she would only dare to wear for Purim! How limited I felt they were. As I try to tie this all in, I think that cross-dressing - drag - is all part of expressing our feelings, fickle though they may be, and others use it for expressing moods, weather or even sexuality.

I don't think I want to limit this issue to just a male-female thing. Dressing up in other's clothing, cross-dressing or more feminine or more masculine, shouldn't just be defined through sexual preference.

Sometimes though, as a feminist crone, I think about the implications of drag and thank the goddess that men want to look softer, less rigid, and also are expressing the other side of themselves. I actually secretly feel that it is a way of balancing themselves between yin-yang or their feminine-masculine sides. It also is flattering that there are men who would like to copy our customs, rituals or whatever women do to express themselves in appearance and behavior.

Signed,
Dick Less

Dear D.L.,

Thank you for writing to Dragazine! Your letter tells us that some if not many women are not offended from Drag Queens who are just out having a good time like the next Joe. Or is that Joan? P.S. Why aren't you playing the Name Game? I think you have true potential! P.P.S. I looked up crone in the dictionary. Yuck! What about crony?

XO,
L.C.

Do you have any tidbits you would like to share with our readers? Send your thoughts, funny or serious, on the subject of Drag to Dragazine, P.O. Box 691664, West Hollywood, CA 90069. We encourage reader participation in this magazine. We encourage everyone to walk in our high heels! It's good for the sole soul. Dragazine is Your Magazine!

PERFORMANCE

C 1991 Herbert Muschamp

This article was originally published in *Vogue*

Role reversal has a long tradition in the theater, but its vitality and humor are no longer confined to the stage. HERBERT MUSCHAMP checks out the **main drag**.

"Everybody who is young has a hope and a dream," says Eileen Ford, the famous model agent, in a scene from *Paris is Burning*, Jennie Livingston's street-smart film about the drag balls of Harlem. "And I don't think it's ever been any different in the history of the world." But clearly *something* is a little different with this year's dreams. In *Paris Is Burning*, for instance, we're seeing men from the black ghetto who dream of superstardom as Eileen Ford models. And today these dreams no longer seem farfetched. The movie is the surprise hit of the summer; per screen, the weekend it opened it outgrossed even *Terminator 2*. So many models long to make the transition to movies. But how many of them take to the big screen as confidently as Dorian Corey, Pepper LaBeija, and the other *etoiles* of *Paris*? How many have starred in a hit?

A fluke? More like the tip of the iceberg. Pepper and Dorian may not yet be household names, but drag - or "gender performance," as it is now more respectfully styled - is a hot item in the cultural marketplace. What was once a tatty fringe of the gay subculture is now streaking through the mainstream. Witness John Cleese putting a new spin on "dress for success" with his drag-pose endorsement for American Express. Or downtown performance artist John Kelly, a.k.a. Dagmar Onassis, heading uptown - to Carnegie Hall. Or cabaret artiste John Epperson, a.k.a. Lypsinka, flying off to Paris to model for Thierry Mugler. Or Mikhail Baryshnikov dancing a pas de deux with Mark Morris *en travestie*.

Welcome to the Wigstock Generation. Not since the days of Woodstock have men worn hair so long, but those old redneck jokes about mistaking hippies for girls wouldn't raise many ruffles with *this* crowd. Though there was certainly no shortage of ruffles at this year's Wigstock Festival - New York's annual convocation of professional and amateur dragsters - or for that matter of ribbons, feather boas, long gloves, and fishnet stockings. This past Labor Day, the festival took over Union Square, the historic site of militant labor rallies. But the thousands who turned out were not clamoring for higher wages and shorter hours. Higher heels and fluffier bouffants were the order of the day.

Drag may not yet be an organized movement, but it has come a long way.

Drag today offers more than lip-synching to Judy Garland, Barbra Streisand, and Vikki Carr; a good many dragsters aspire to the cultural eminence of Picasso, Nijinsky, and Warhol. They won't be satisfied with some tacky poster for Drag Night stuck up over the bar in a waterfront dive. They want to be written up in *Artforum*. A few of them have been. And it's not just the arty ones such as Morris and Kelly who deserve serious notice. Among the surprise rewards of *Paris Is Burning* are the sophisticated insights of the old-style queens into the history and meaning of cross-dressing. I've never had the impulse to wear drag, but I'd gladly take a course on grace under pressure from Pepper LaBeija. There's more wisdom in his *hand movements* than in a season of solemn pronouncements from all those pop sages Bill Moyers puts up on public TV.

Of course, drag is drag, and on the level of show-biz glamour, these performers don't disappoint. They don't stint on the feathers, beads, and costume changes that would put Lana Turner to shame. In the process, they're pleasing increasingly larger audiences. In their own outrageous way, today's drag performers are as committed as Jesse Helms to preserving time-honored traditions. They're keeping alive the flame of a thousand defunct chorus lines, carrying the torch of such extinct or moribund institutions as the Playboy Bunny and the Copa Girl.

In the process they're pleasing increasingly larger audiences. Charles Busch's *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* became one of the longest-running plays off-Broadway. And if, as he lamented at one of the final New York performances of his most recent hit, *Red Scare on Sunset*, "my tour de force may be forced to tour," he's likely to find an eager audience on the road for his 1950s Hollywood sweetheart Mary Dale, who fights the good fight against creeping Communism. Mary sets out to resist oppression from the Hollywood Left and ends up the dupe of McCarthyism. In one of her dramatic speeches, Mary dismisses a Communist actress who is also a rival for her husband. "Look at Marta, spinning her wheels in B-movies. She didn't have what it takes to be a true star - beauty, glamour, drive. There always have been stars, and there always will be. It's the reason one kitten stands out in a litter. It's part of the great cosmos around us. Politics come and go, but the star system is eternal."

Lypsinka started out playing late-night shows on a tiny off-off-Broadway stage in New York, moved to a long run in Los Angeles (partially backed by Madonna), recently played the high-toned Ballroom in New York, and returns next month with a new show, *The Lypsinka Television Spectacular*. Lypsinka specializes in a

particular breed of American geisha; the postwar American mini-star, like Dolores Gray and Gisele MacKenzie. Stalking the stage in lace flounces over a black leotard, Lypsinka recalls the archetypal American woman on the eve of the feminist movement; coiffed, powdered, desperate to please - though the maniacal smile painted on Lypsinka's face hints a rage behind the eagerness. *Pageant*, a spoof of beauty contests that is still running in New York after seven months, presents the deliriousness of swimsuit and "talent" competitions, and we can laugh at the inanity of it all without demeaning the contestants. They are men, after all, and this is comedy.

Clearly, for these performers, drag is more than trying to pass as a woman. They exploit artifice and theatricality as metaphors for the illusions and conventions that stylize modern life. They know as well as the most scholarly semiotician that society operates by means of codes: sign languages not only of gender but of class, race, and political persuasion. And they know as well as the Woodstock Generation that it takes more than a march on Washington to change the codes. It also helps to try something a little different with your hair.

The natural roots of today's mainstream wiggery go back to the gender bending of the 1960s. Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures*, a pioneering underground film, received widespread notoriety when it was seized by the New York vice squad in 1962. The raid also launched the film career of Mario Montez, a Manhattan postal worker by day who at night assumed a female persona styled after Maria Montez, the camp film siren of the 1940s. By the late 1960s the female superstars of Warhol's Factory had been eclipsed by a transvestite trio, Jackie Curtis, Candy Darling and Holly Woodlawn. No stranger himself to the wig life, Warhol began to use drag queens at the moment when women were rejecting conventions of fashion and makeup. As Warhol put it, "For a while we were casting a lot of drag queens in our movies because the real girls we knew couldn't seem to get excited about anything, and the drag queens could get excited about anything." And they used that excitement to stir up audiences. They revived the dying art of cabaret with acts such as the Cockettes and the Angels of Light in San Francisco, the Hot Peaches and the Palm Casino Revue in New York. In a way these shows were Minimal Art. They proved that it didn't take massive resources to create theater. All it took was a record player, a string of Christmas lights, and a performer with a strong sense of make-believe to summon up imaginary Vegas lounges with full orchestras, white pianos, billowing curtains, and plumed show girls descending endless

staircases.

Drag reached new heights in the early seventies when the Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo proved that men could go up on pointe. Arlene Croce, *The New Yorker's* eminent dance critic, had uptown audiences trooping down to a loft in Manhattan's meat market when she wrote glowingly on the genuine classic style of fake ballerinas such as Olga Tchikaboumskaya and Tamara Karpova, "the black rhinestone of Russian Ballet." In Croce's view, Karpova (a.k.a. Antony Bassae) possessed "more wit, more plasticity, more elegance, and even more femininity" than the Bolshoi's famed Sorokina, then appearing at the Met, "and the way Karpova used her snap-open fan put Sorokina to shame." A decade later Tchikaboumskaya (a.k.a. Peter Anastos) would be at the Met himself, collaborating with Baryshnikov on *Cinderella*.

Charles Ludlam, Everett Quinton, and Harvey Fierstein, meanwhile, brought new life to the stage by undermining some of the theater's most stifling pretensions. "Serious" theater in those days meant having to listen to Edward Albee explain for the ninety-ninth time that *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf* wasn't about two male couples in drag. Maybe it should have been, one thought, after seeing Ludlam essay the title role in *Camille*, a tubercular cough racking his hairy décolletage, feebly entreating his maid to "throw another faggot on the fire." "Serious" theater meant having to listen to would-be Samuel Becketts complain that tired businessmen only wanted to go to Broadway musicals for a little bit of escapism at the end of a long day. Ludlam and Quinton understood how desperately we need that escapism - some laughs, some costumes, a bit of leg. Their plays set out to demonstrate that such frivolities are not incompatible with a "serious" message.

It was Divine, I think, who said that he'd finally given up trying to look like Elizabeth Taylor, when he opened the *Star* one day and realized that Liz looked just like him. Madonna's image of exaggerated female sexuality is essentially a drag persona (it's a good thing she shows all that flesh, lest anyone doubt she's All Woman). So is Arnold Schwarzenegger's inflated image of the muscle man. The "classical" look of the bodybuilder was one of the founding images of camp. When Schwarzenegger undresses, he's showing us as artificial a creation as Dorian Corey in full regalia, a pumped-up creation requiring more maintenance than a roomful of vogueurs.

Not only gender stereotypes are brought into focus by drag. For many people the most fascinating part of *Paris Is Burning* was the segment that showed contestants competing in the category of "realness". In

these competitions men turned up dressed not just like *Vogue* models but as every mainstream stereotype - the preppie, the country squire, the business executive, the marine sergeant. These impersonations were not parodies or satires but serious enactments of social types. Some movie critics viewed these performers as objects of pity because they try so hard to emulate the values of a mainstream that has rejected them. Realness speaks not just of men who try to pass as women but of gays who try to pass as straights and light-skinned blacks who once passed as whites. But impersonators of Realness don't take exclusion lying down. They turn a mirror on the mainstream and its unthinking willingness to accept as real the props and stage sets of daily life.

Perhaps it's not surprising that an art form that trades so profitably in stereotypes should suffer from stereotyping itself. It's sometimes said that drag performers are antiwomen and that behind their satire of feminine mannerisms is vicious mockery, a scarcely concealed expression of hatred and/or envy. Drag does indeed draw heavily on the image of the prefeminist woman in all her glorified helplessness: tottering around on high heels, restricted by corsets, fluttering her lashes to elicit the protection of the strong male. Yet to satirize these mannerisms is hardly to endorse them. And in fact today's drag acts can be as outspokenly feminist as any pro-choice advocate. In *Pageant* a "spokesperson" makes a pitch for Glamouress beauty products, the pageant's fictional sponsor. She urges all "us girls" in the audience to wear more makeup because it's our duty to "make the world a better place so that men have something nice to look at while they run it."

And there's a flip side to the use of beauty for sexist exploitation: beauty has long been the province of the conventionally powerless. The disenfranchised have long held the franchise on art. What drag honors in the traditional women's role is not its weakness but rather the power of the imagination that was its compensating strength. The drag queen enacts the ability of the outsider to create something wonderful out of nothing: a novel out of paper, a painting out of blank canvas, stardom from the body she was born with. Beauty isn't just Women's Work; breathing new life into culture is the job outsiders have traditionally taken on. When at the end of each taped show-stopping number Lypsinka flings his long gloved arms over his head and holds the pose to canned applause - a show-girl version of Rocky victorious - he's not just basking in personal glory. He's accepting an ovation on behalf of every artist who started out with just a dream and ended up with the world at her feet. HM/

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Gender

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even a transsexual!

Lois: Tell us a tip on how to be a more successful Drag Queen!

Gender: I would say get out there more in Drag - in full 'geesh', as in geisha. You should be seen on the scene!

Lois: Are you in The Imperial Court?

Gender: No, but I've known the current Empress of Los Angeles' Imperial Court, Rosie Del Mar, for a long long long time. I used to take Rosie out at a club in West Covina called Scene One, and we had a pretty wild experiences at Los Estrellas.

Lois: What's Peanuts Bar like on Monday nights?

Gender: The club is filled almost entirely with men, half of them are in dresses, and the other half like it. You'll see everything at Peanuts. We went into a club that Chi Chi and I heard about in New York called Aidelweiss. We loved it! We loved it! It was delightful! I had a certain amount of anonymity there as compared to Peanuts because I was the freshest meat! Lots and lots of flirting! Flirting is a lot of fun! I think that is a big part of why people go out in Drag. The Queens do get dressed up for each other. There's one working girl that used to go out in cut-off shorts and some kind of like tank top; big blonde hair, lots of face surgery, real tan - she looked like Daisy Mae from Dukes of Hazard - huge huge tits, Huge! Very convincing. I think I saw her in the same outfit every time, but it always worked. When I think of all the men whocould appreciate a Drag Queen! I mean, these guys leave their wives sitting at the table and come over and say, 'Oh, we just loved your show', and 'Gosh you look good' under their breathe! It's funny to think that society likes to hush hush hush hush. They don't want to admit that there are a lot of men out there that would like that. People out there are shocked - like you mean there's clubs where men go dressed up in Drag? Yessss.

Lois: Tell us about Genderella.

Gender: Genderella was the result of my wanting to do a showcase. I was doing a lot of shows at Sit-N-Spin. I gave an outline to a friend of mine whose Drag name is Petula - he's a professional screen writer. He took my outline and turned it into a fabulous script. We took some pre-recorded instrumental tracks and wrote some original words too. My friend Sharon Kane wrote original lyrics to some other songs, and we wrote a book and lyrics. I think people were surprised - not only was it a musical, but it was a full book musical!

Lois: Do you know where you're going to?

Gender: Performing as Gender is very very satisfying. I've been very fortunate to do out of town gigs. Also, I've been very fortunate getting some national exposure - actually two articles in The Advocate. There's a Gay Vaudeville circuit, and I'd like to break into it. I admire people like Charles Pierce, Jim Bailey, Jimmy James and Lypsinka.

Lois: Well, I want to thank you so much for allowing Dragazine to probe the real you. Thank you Gender!



Cartoon by David Yazhen

transvestites

transvesmites